



PARTICIPATION IN RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD PROGRAMS IN THE PACT EVALUATION: ASSOCIATIONS WITH FATHER AND PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS

OPRE Report 2018-96

October 2018

Julia Alamillo and Heather Zaveri



Since 2005, Congress has funded Responsible Fatherhood (RF) grants to support programs for fathers that promote responsible parenting, economic stability, and healthy marriage. Although many fathers voluntarily enroll in these programs, service providers often struggle with program attendance and completion (Zaveri et al. 2015). RF programs cannot achieve their intended outcomes if fathers participate minimally or not at all. Factors related to fathers' circumstances and the programs that serve them may explain what leads some fathers to participate more than others. Understanding the associations between these factors and RF program participation may help practitioners design and target their services to maximize program attendance and completion—and ultimately improve fathers' outcomes.

To explore this and other questions, the Office of Family Assistance (OFA) at the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services sponsored a multicomponent evaluation—the Parents and



MATHEMATICA
Policy Research

Children Together (PACT) evaluation. PACT included a study of four RF programs awarded grants in 2011. The RF programs in PACT were funded and overseen by OFA, while ACF's Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) oversaw the PACT evaluation. As required by their grants, the programs offered services in parenting and fatherhood, economic stability, and healthy relationships and marriage. The programs generally took one of two approaches to service delivery: (1) a cohort approach that offered intensive and integrated services or (2) an open-entry approach that allowed fathers to select from a menu of services. For more information on implementation findings from PACT, see Zaveri et al. 2015 or Dion et al. 2018.

The PACT Evaluation

The PACT evaluation is a large-scale multicomponent project to broaden our understanding of Responsible Fatherhood (RF) and Healthy Marriage (HM) programs. The PACT evaluation addresses research questions from several angles by using a mixed-methods approach that includes the following:

- Implementation study of four RF and two HM programs
- Impact study of four RF and two HM programs
- Qualitative study of fathers in four RF programs
- Descriptive study of Hispanic RF programs
- Study of trauma-informed approaches for men in re-entry

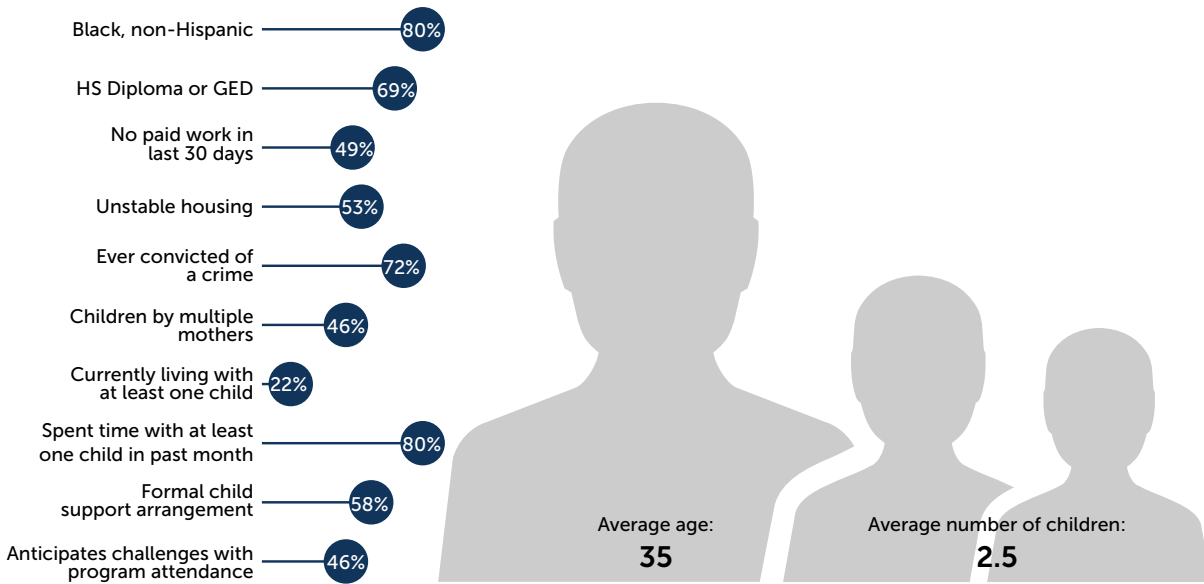
The fathers in PACT's impact and implementation studies enrolled in one of four RF programs: (1) Successful STEPS at Connections to Success in Kansas City, Kansas, and Kansas City, Missouri; (2) the Family Formation Program at the Fathers' Support Center in St. Louis, Missouri; (3) The FATHER Project at Goodwill—Easter Seals Minnesota in Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota; and (4) the Center for Fathering at Urban Ventures in Minneapolis, Minnesota. A detailed description of these four programs is available in a report on the implementation of RF programs in PACT (Zaveri et al. 2015).

This brief presents new findings on the factors that are associated with fathers' participation in RF programs. It is based on data collected for the implementation study of RF programs, which documents how the programs were designed and operated and identifies challenges and promising practices. It uses data from the PACT evaluation to describe the characteristics of fathers enrolled in PACT and the associations between the fathers' characteristics and their program participation. The brief also explores variation in participation by programmatic differences. It concludes with a summary of common barriers to participation and suggestions for program providers about how to help fathers overcome these barriers. Because the data come from a select sample of four urban programs, the findings may not generalize to all RF programs.

MOST ENROLLED FATHERS WERE LOW-INCOME, BLACK MEN IN THEIR MID-30S

Baseline data collected at program enrollment from a sample of 5,522 fathers showed that fathers were 35 years old, on average (Figure 1). The majority were black men with histories of incarceration who struggled with unstable housing and employment.

Figure 1. Baseline characteristics of enrolled fathers

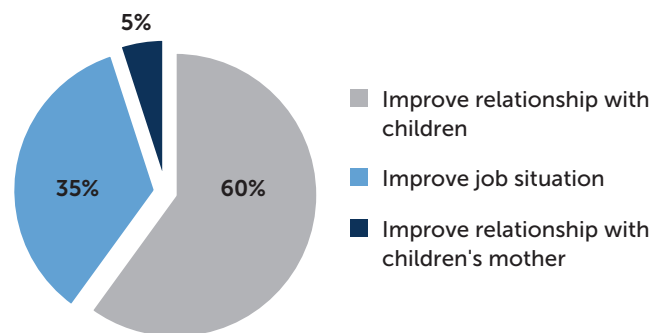


Source: PACT baseline survey.

Although over two-thirds of fathers had a high school diploma or GED, most were economically disadvantaged, with almost half reporting no recent earnings. Fathers had between two and three children, on average, and nearly half of them had children with multiple mothers. Many, though not all, fathers did not live with their children and over half had a child support order. The vast majority of fathers had recently spent time with at least some, and sometimes all, of their children.

At enrollment, fathers were asked to indicate whether they expected that transportation problems or other commitments would make it difficult for them to attend the program. Nearly half of fathers anticipated that they would have challenges attending the program due to these factors.

Figure 2. Fathers' primary motivation for enrolling in RF program



Source: PACT baseline survey.

Fathers were also asked to report their primary motivation for enrolling in the program (Figure 2). The majority said that their primary motivation was to improve their relationships with their children. Just over one-third said that their primary motivation was to improve their job situation. A small

percentage said that they enrolled to improve their relationships with the mother(s) of their children.

MOST FATHERS ATTENDED SERVICES AND RECEIVED A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF HOURS

Nine months after enrolling in an RF program, more than three-quarters of fathers had attended at least one program service, most often a core workshop, which addressed a topic required by the grant (Table 1). Initial attendance varied by program and program approach. Initial attendance was slightly higher at the two programs that offered open-entry workshops—The FATHER Project and Urban Ventures—than at the two integrated cohort programs—Connections to Success and Fathers’ Support Center.

Table 1. Participation in RF programs

	Integrated Cohort Programs		Open-Entry Workshop Programs		Total Sample
	Connections to Success	Fathers’ Support Center	The FATHER Project	Urban Ventures	
Initial attendance					
Any program attendance (%)	65	69	73	91	76
Ever attended a core workshop (%)	59	66	69	72	68
Dosage					
Hours of participation in any program service	37	87	20	14	45
Hours of participation in core workshops	32 ^a	83 ^b	17	11	41
Core workshop hours attended (%)	41	40	26	33	35
Retention					
Attended more than 50% of sessions (%)					
Parenting workshop	49 ^c	41 ^c	30	44	41
Economic stability workshop	49 ^c	41 ^c	21	13	30
Relationship workshop	11	41 ^c	3	20	23
Sample size	388	995	556	822	2,761

Source: PACTIS and site MIS data.

Note: Sites began PACT intake between December 9, 2012, and February 13, 2013. All fathers randomly assigned to receive the program and their participation during the first nine months following random assignment are included in the table (N = 2,761).

^a The number of hours that fathers could participate in core workshops at Connections to Success varied during the evaluation. Midway through the evaluation, Connections to Success changed the format of its parenting and economic stability workshop, which increased the number of hours offered. Prior to this change, participants could have received a maximum of 64 hours of core workshops, whereas after this change, participants could have received a maximum of 89 hours of core workshops. Thirty-nine percent of fathers attended the earlier format of the program and sixty-one percent of fathers attended the later format of the program. This table provides the average workshop hours fathers received aggregated across both formats.

^b Fathers’ Support Center offered two formats of its integrated workshop, and the number of hours offered varied by format. Participants who attended a daytime version could have received 240 hours of core workshops, whereas participants who attended an evening version could have received 120 hours of core workshops. Seventy-three percent of fathers attended the daytime version of the program and twenty-seven percent of fathers attended the evening version of the program. This table provides the average workshop hours fathers received aggregated across both formats.

^c Content was integrated into a single workshop.

The average number of hours of program services attended ranged from a low of 14 hours at Urban Ventures to a high of 87 hours at Fathers' Support Center. Fathers attended more hours at the two integrated cohort programs compared to the two open-entry programs. Across all four programs, fathers attended an average of 45 hours of programming.

Fathers spent the majority of their time attending core workshops offered by the programs. On average, fathers participated in 41 hours of core workshops across all four programs. Because the total number of core workshop hours offered varied widely across programs, from 31 hours to 240 hours, we also calculated fathers' core workshop participation as a percentage of the number of hours offered by the program. Across the four programs, fathers attended 35 percent of the core workshop hours offered. Fathers in integrated cohort programs received a greater percentage of core workshop hours than those in open-entry programs.

Of the three services required by the RF grant, retention across all programs was highest in the parenting workshop. We define retention as attending at least half of the workshop sessions offered. For three of the four programs, the economic stability workshop also had high rates of retention—sometimes equal to the parenting workshop. Retention was lowest in the relationship workshop for all programs that offered a separate workshop on this topic. Fathers were most likely to receive content in all areas at Fathers' Support Center, due to its approach of integrating all content into a single workshop.

HOW FATHERS' CHARACTERISTICS MAY BE RELATED TO THEIR PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

Although the literature on the predictors of RF program participation is scarce, interviews with program staff and fathers as well as observations of program activities offered some suggestions for how fathers' characteristics may affect their participation. We examined fathers' baseline characteristics in six areas that may be related to program participation:

- 1. Age, education, and race/ethnicity.** Program participation may be greater among older rather than younger fathers because older fathers tend to come to programs with more maturity, ready to make a change in their lives (Holcomb et al. 2015). Participation may also be greater among men with lower educational attainment if they expect to receive services to improve their education, such as high school equivalency classes. In addition, fathers may be more likely to participate when there are a sizeable number of other fathers in the program from the same racial or ethnic group. Findings from other components of the PACT evaluation suggest that the camaraderie and support fathers receive from each other is a key reason they continue to attend these RF programs (Holcomb et al. 2015).
- 2. Life challenges.** Life challenges, such as unemployment, housing instability, criminal history, and depression may act as barriers to participation. RF programs intentionally offer assistance in these areas to engage hard-to-reach and hard-to-serve fathers

(Zaveri et al. 2015). For example, the programs in PACT helped fathers identify and apply for jobs and prepare to answer difficult questions about their criminal history during job interviews. The programs also covered personal development topics, such as stress management, conflict resolution, and goal setting and attainment. Given this content, fathers with life challenges may participate in RF programs at the same or higher rates than fathers without these challenges.

- 3. Motivation for enrolling.** Fathers' motivations for enrolling in RF programs are likely to be related to their subsequent participation. For example, most fathers reported that their primary reason for enrolling was to improve their relationship with their children. If those fathers view the main focus of the program as improving parenting skills, then they may attend more than fathers who are primarily motivated to enroll for other reasons.
- 4. Participation challenges.** Fathers face a number of competing obligations and barriers that can make participation in RF programs difficult (Stahlschmidt et al. 2013). Fathers who anticipate difficulty attending a program due to transportation issues or scheduling conflicts such as job or family obligations may be less likely to attend the program. If this is the case, asking fathers about attendance challenges at the time of enrollment could help programs identify fathers who are likely to struggle with participation and would benefit from supports to mitigate these challenges.
- 5. Relationship status.** Mothers often play a key role in encouraging both resident and nonresident fathers' involvement in their children's lives (Carlson and McLanahan 2004). They may also encourage fathers' participation in other activities to improve their parenting skills. For this reason, fathers who are in a romantic or marital relationship with the mother of one or more of their children may be more likely to participate in RF programming than fathers who are not.
- 6. Contact with children and child support.** Qualitative research from the PACT evaluation shows that most nonresidential fathers long to be more involved with their children (Holcomb et al. 2015). These fathers may be more likely to attend services if they expect to receive help gaining access to their children. This may be especially true for fathers who have children with multiple women and need help navigating this complex situation. In addition, fathers with child support orders may be more interested in participating in programming than fathers without such orders, if they anticipate receiving help with managing their child support obligations.

SEVERAL BASELINE CHARACTERISTICS WERE ASSOCIATED WITH PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

We examined the associations between fathers' characteristics at program enrollment and two measures of program participation following enrollment: (1) initial attendance (measured by whether fathers ever attended a core workshop) and (2) dosage (measured by the percentage of core workshop hours fathers attended). For these analyses, we pooled data across the four programs. We used logistic regression to estimate how fathers' characteristics were related to their likelihood of ever attending a core workshop (Model 1) and ordinary least squares regression to estimate how fathers'

characteristics were related to the percentage of core workshop hours they received (Model 2). We present results from these two models as the predicted percentage of fathers who attended a core workshop and the predicted percentage of core workshop hours that fathers attended (Table 2). These percentages show the predicted initial attendance and dosage for fathers who have the particular characteristic in question, but who otherwise have the average characteristics of all fathers in the sample.

Table 2. Predicted participation in RF programs

	Percentage that ever attended a core workshop (Model 1)	Percentage of core workshop hours attended (Model 2)
Age, race/ethnicity, and education		
Age		
Younger than 35 years old	65**	32**
35 years or older	71	39
Race and ethnicity		
Hispanic	63	31
Black, non-Hispanic	69	36
Other race	69	38
White, non-Hispanic	65	33
Education		
Does not have high school diploma/GED	69	35
Has high school diploma or GED	68	36
Life challenges		
Parole status		
On parole	71*	36
Not on parole	67	35
Psychological well-being		
At risk for moderate/severe depression	71*	37
Not at risk for moderate/severe depression	67	35
Earnings in last 30 days		
No earnings	66	36
\$1 to \$1,000	70	35
More than \$1,001	68	36
Housing stability		
Homeless	64	32
Unstable housing	70	37
Stable housing	68	35
Criminal conviction		
Ever been convicted of a crime	68	36
Never been convicted of a crime	67	35

(Continued on next page)

(Continued from previous page)

	Percentage that ever attended a core workshop (Model 1)	Percentage of core workshop hours attended (Model 2)
Motivation for enrolling		
Primary motivation to participate in RF program		
Improve relationship with children's mother	76*	35
Improve job situation	68	35
<i>Improve relationship with children</i>	67	36
Participation challenges		
Anticipated challenges with program attendance		
One or more anticipated challenges ^a	62**	31**
<i>No anticipated challenges</i>	73	40
Relationship status		
Romantic relationship status		
In a romantic relationship with mother of at least one child	66†	35
In a romantic relationship with woman other than mother of at least one child	66*	36
In romantic relationships with multiple women	72	37
<i>Not in a romantic relationship</i>	70	36
Marital history with children's mother		
Never married to mother of at least one child	68	35
<i>Ever married to mother of at least one child</i>	70	37
Contact with children and child support		
Living arrangements with biological or adopted children		
Does not live with any biological or adopted children	69**	37**
Lives with at least one but not all biological or adopted children	64	30
<i>Lives with all biological or adopted children</i>	61	30
Legal child support for at least one child		
Does not have legal child support arrangement	64*	32**
Has legal child support arrangement, did not pay in last 30 days	71	38
<i>Has legal child support arrangement, paid in last 30 days</i>	70	38
Number of biological or adopted children		
One	67	35
<i>Two or more</i>	69	35
Complex families		
Has children with multiple mothers	67	36
<i>Does not have children with multiple mothers</i>	69	35

(Continued on next page)

(Continued from previous page)

	Percentage that ever attended a core workshop (Model 1)	Percentage of core workshop hours attended (Model 2)
Spending time with biological/adopted children		
Did not spend time with any biological/adopted children in past month	68	37
Spent time with at least one but not all biological/adopted children in past month	70	36
<i>Spent time with all biological or adopted children in past month</i>	66	34
Program		
Connections to Success	57**	39**
Fathers' Support Center	65**	40**
The FATHER Project	72	28*
<i>Urban Ventures</i>	74	34

Source: PACTIS and site MIS data.

Note: Baseline characteristics measured at time of program enrollment (N = 2,600). The results for Model 1 come from a linear probability model and show the predicted percentage of fathers who attended a core workshop. The results from Model 2 come from an ordinary least squares model and show the predicted percentage of core workshop hours that fathers attended. For each characteristic, the results show the predicted levels of attendance (Model 1) or proportion of workshop hours received (Model 2) for a father who has that particular characteristic, but who otherwise has the average characteristics of all fathers in the sample. The models also included a flag for whether the father was expecting his first child.

^a Represents the percentage of fathers who indicated that transportation problems and/or other conflicts would make it hard for them to attend the program.

[†] p < 0.10, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01. Tests of statistical significance refer to the difference between the predicted probability of attendance (Model 1) or percentage of hours attended (Model 2) for fathers with the particular characteristic and those in the reference category group. For each characteristic, the reference category appears in italics.

We found that fathers who were 35 years or older when they enrolled in an RF program were more likely to initially attend a core workshop than younger fathers. They also attended a greater percentage of workshop hours. Fathers' race and ethnicity and education level did not predict their likelihood of workshop attendance or the percentage of workshop hours they received.

Fathers who were on parole or who displayed symptoms of moderate to severe depression were more likely to initially attend core workshops. However, these challenges did not predict the percentage of core workshop hours that the fathers attended. Fathers who reported challenges related to earnings, housing stability, and criminal history were as likely to attend RF programs as fathers who were not dealing with these challenges. These fathers also participated in a similar percentage of core workshop hours compared with other fathers.

The small percentage of fathers (5 percent) who reported that their primary motivation to participate in RF programs was to improve their relationship with their children's mother were more likely to initially attend a workshop than fathers who said their primary motivation was to improve their relationship with their children. Fathers' motivation for enrolling in an RF program was not associated with participating in a higher percentage of core workshop hours.

Fathers who anticipated that transportation problems or other commitments would make it challenging for them to attend the program were less likely to initially attend a core workshop than fathers who did not anticipate such challenges. These fathers also participated in a smaller percentage of core workshop hours compared to other fathers.

Fathers' relationship status predicted their initial participation in core workshops, but not the percentage of core workshop hours they received. Fathers who were not in a romantic relationship were more likely to attend a core workshop than fathers who were in a romantic relationship. Fathers' marital history did not predict their program participation.

Finally, fathers who did not live with any of their children were more likely to initially attend a core workshop. They also participated in a greater percentage of workshop hours. Fathers without a child support order were significantly less likely to attend a core workshop. They also participated in fewer core workshop hours. Other measures of contact with children and child support did not predict fathers' initial attendance at core workshops or the percentage of core workshop hours they received. These measures included fathers' number of biological or adopted children, family complexity, the amount of time fathers spent with their children, and having a child support order but no recent payment history.

PROGRAMMATIC FACTORS ALSO HELPED EXPLAIN FATHERS' PARTICIPATION

Our regression results indicate that even after accounting for a wide range of fathers' characteristics, there remained a great deal of unexplained variation in participation across the four RF programs studied. At the bottom of Table 2, the results for the Program variable show that fathers participated in a significantly greater percentage of core workshop hours at the two integrated cohort programs (Connections to Success and Fathers' Support Center) than at the two open-entry programs (The FATHER Project and Urban Ventures). However, initial attendance at core workshops was slightly higher in the two open-entry programs.¹ One likely explanation for these patterns is that the integrated cohort programs offered all-day workshops, so fathers could receive a large percentage of workshop hours in a few days. In contrast, the open-entry programs offered only a couple of workshop hours per week. Initial attendance was likely higher at open-entry programs because fathers could enroll in the program and attend their first workshop at any point, even as soon as the same day. At the integrated cohort programs, fathers might have to wait up to two weeks for a new workshop to start.

In addition to the service delivery approach, other program design elements may have contributed to variation in fathers' initial and continued attendance. To examine how the associations between fathers' characteristics and their participation varied across programs, we also estimated regression models separately for each program (see the appendix). We

¹Switching the reference category from Urban Ventures to The FATHER Project confirmed that initial attendance was significantly higher at the two open-entry programs than at the two integrated cohort programs.

used information about program design and implementation strategies from site visits and staff interviews to hypothesize how these strategies influenced participation.

The site-specific regression results revealed a great deal of variation in how fathers' characteristics were associated with participation at each program. Of the 17 variables included in the models, 15 were statistically significant for at least one program and outcome. However, the large number of variables and smaller sample sizes in these site-specific models make it challenging to summarize and interpret the results, and also increase the possibility that some significant findings may be due to chance. To address these concerns, below we highlight selected findings from these exploratory analyses and suggest explanations based on what we know about the practices and strategies used in particular programs.

Providing meals may encourage homeless fathers to attend. The site-specific regression results indicated that homeless fathers were about equally likely to participate in services as fathers with stable living arrangements at The FATHER Project and Urban Ventures, but they were somewhat less likely to participate at Connections to Success and Fathers' Support Center (this finding was only statistically significant for Connections to Success). At The FATHER Project and Urban Ventures, a hot meal was provided before each workshop, which may have encouraged fathers without a stable home to attend.

Organizations with a reputation for supporting re-entering people may be appealing to fathers on parole. There was a significant positive association between fathers' parole status and their initial attendance at Urban Ventures, which was not present at the other three programs. Urban Ventures received referrals from parole officers, had a relationship with the court system, and was known as a supportive place for people re-entering the community after incarceration. In addition, a re-employment agency for ex-offenders was located in the same building as Urban Ventures and provided referrals to the RF program. All of these factors may have contributed to higher rates of participation in this program among fathers who were on parole.

On-site support for mental health may encourage participation among fathers with depressive symptoms. There was a significant positive association between fathers' depressive symptoms and their initial attendance at The FATHER Project, which was not present at the other three programs. Although none of the programs were allowed to use RF grant funds to provide mental health treatment, Goodwill-Easter Seals Minnesota, which ran The FATHER Project, opened a mental health clinic mid-way through the PACT evaluation.² This extra on-site support may have contributed to this finding.

Peer support may encourage attendance among fathers who have little or no contact with their children. At Fathers' Support Center, fathers who reported that they had not spent time with any of their children in the past month attended a significantly greater percentage of workshop hours than fathers who reported that they had spent

²This clinic was not supported by RF grant funds.

time with all of their children. Spending time with children did not predict program participation at the other three programs. This result may stem from the amount of support fathers received from each other and from facilitators at Fathers' Support Center. Each daily session began with a check-in, when fathers could share personal stories and offer support to one another, often on the topic of involvement with children. Most of the facilitators were graduates of the program who could relate to the fathers' experiences. Previous research suggests that peer support is one of the key factors driving fathers' participation in RF programs (Holcomb et al. 2015; Osborne et al. 2017). The supportive environment at Fathers' Support Center and the advice that fathers shared about gaining access and spending time with their children may explain the higher rates of participation among fathers who had limited or no contact with their children.

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

The results of our analyses point to strategies that may be effective for program providers looking to boost fathers' participation in services. We identified four characteristics of fathers that predicted both initial and ongoing participation in core workshops: (1) age, (2) anticipated participation challenges, (3) living arrangements with children, and (4) having a child support order.

- **Age.** Older fathers participated at higher levels than younger fathers, perhaps because they came to programs with a greater willingness to change their lives. This result suggests that programs should consider finding ways to make their services more appealing to younger fathers or screening fathers to ensure that they are ready to make a change.
- **Anticipated participation challenges.** Fathers who indicated at enrollment that transportation or other commitments might make it difficult to attend services displayed lower initial and ongoing attendance than fathers who did not anticipate these challenges. Programs may be able to identify fathers who expect to face participation challenges at enrollment and help improve their attendance through individualized support, transportation assistance, and flexible scheduling. For example, case managers may proactively discuss how fathers will address anticipated challenges, provide bus or subway tokens, or offer workshops at various times throughout the day.
- **Living arrangements with children.** Fathers who did not live with any of their children were more likely to attend core workshops. They also attended a greater number of hours than fathers who lived with some or all of their children. Interviews with fathers suggest that lack of access to children is a key source of frustration that motivates men to participate in RF programs (Holcomb et al. 2015). In addition, fathers who live with their children may struggle to find child care while attending the program. To boost attendance among fathers who live with

at least one of their children, programs may want to emphasize how their services are designed to benefit their children. Programs may also consider helping fathers identify child care or provide onsite child care to make it easier for them to attend.

- **Having a child support order.** Fathers with a child support order were more likely to attend a core workshop. They also participated in a greater percentage of workshop hours than fathers without a child support order. Although fathers often experienced challenges and frustration with the child support system, they also reported enrolling in the programs to get help resolving child support issues (Clary et al. 2017; Dion et al. 2018). Each RF program established relationships with their local child support office to assist fathers with navigating the child support system—which may have boosted participation among fathers in need of these services. Like the RF programs in the PACT evaluation, programs should help fathers address their child support concerns and build partnerships with child support offices to encourage fathers' participation.

In addition, four characteristics predicted fathers' initial, but not ongoing, participation in core workshops. These were: (1) being on parole, (2) displaying symptoms of moderate to severe depression, (3) being motivated to improve their relationship with their children's mother, and (4) not being in a romantic relationship. These characteristics may have implications for how programs initially engage fathers. For example, programs could emphasize to fathers how participation can fulfill parole requirements or strengthen co-parenting skills outside of a romantic relationship. Programs should also think about how to connect fathers to mental health services while they attend RF programming.

Findings from the site-specific regression models, site visits, and staff interviews also hinted at the importance of programmatic factors for fathers' initial and continued participation in RF programs. Fathers at integrated cohort programs received a much higher dosage of programming than fathers in open-entry programs. They also completed a higher proportion of total hours offered. Programs also appeared to encourage fathers' participation by offering complementary services, such as mental health services or employment assistance for ex-offenders, in the same building or a nearby location. Another strategy some programs used to boost participation was emphasizing the importance of peer support—for instance, by encouraging fathers to share their personal stories and hiring facilitators fathers could relate to.

Overall, these results highlight factors related to fathers and programs that influence fathers' initial and ongoing attendance. By identifying the characteristics and life circumstances that facilitate or present barriers to fathers' participation, programs can take steps to help fathers engage in RF programs. In addition, programs should recognize that how they design and implement their RF services can make a big difference in the likelihood of program participation and ultimately the benefits that fathers may receive from the program.

REFERENCES

Carlson, Marcia, and Sara McLanahan. "Early Father Involvement in Fragile Families." In *Conceptualizing and Measuring Father Involvement*, edited by R. D. Day and M. E. Lamb. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2004, pp. 241–271.

Clary, Elizabeth, Pamela Holcomb, Robin Dion, and Kathryn Edin. "Providing Financial Support for Children: Views and Experiences of Low-Income Fathers in the PACT Evaluation." OPRE Report No. 2017-14. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2017.

Dion, Robin, Pamela Holcomb, Heather Zaveri, Angela Valdovinos D'Angelo, Elizabeth Clary, Daniel Friend, and Scott Baumgartner. *Parents and Children Together: The Complex Needs of Low-Income Men and How Responsible Fatherhood Programs Address Them.* OPRE Report No. 2018-18. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2018.

Holcomb, Pamela, Kathryn Edin, Jeffrey Max, Alford Young Jr., Angela Valdovinos D'Angelo, Daniel Friend, and Waldo E. Johnson Jr. "In Their Own Voices: The Hopes and Struggles of Responsible Fatherhood Participants in the Parents and Children Together (PACT) Evaluation." OPRE Report No. 2015-67. Washington, DC: Mathematica Policy Research, 2015.

Osborne, Cynthia, Kaeley Benson, Andrea Michelsen, and Abby Lane. "Fathers in Need: How Can Programs Support Fathers in Their Roles?" Presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management, Chicago, IL, November 4, 2017.

Stahlschmidt, M. J., J. Threlfall, K. D. Seay, E. M. Lewis, and P. L. Kohl. "Recruiting Fathers to Parenting Programs: Advice from Dads and Fatherhood Program Providers." *Children and Youth Services Review*, vol. 35, no. 10, 2013, pp. 1734–1741.

Zaveri, Heather, Scott Baumgartner, Robin Dion, and Liz Clary. "Parents and Children Together: Design and Implementation of Responsible Fatherhood Programs." OPRE Report No. 2015-76. Washington, DC: Mathematica Policy Research, 2015.

This brief was funded by the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation under Contract Number HHSP23320095642WC. The ACF Project Officer was Seth Chamberlain and the Project Monitor was Kathleen McCoy. The Mathematica project director was Sarah Avellar.

This brief is in the public domain. Permission to reproduce is not necessary. Suggested citation: Alamillo, Julia and Heather Zaveri. (2018). *Participation in Responsible Fatherhood Programs in the PACT Evaluation: Associations with Father and Program Characteristics.* OPRE Report Number 2018-96. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

This brief and other reports sponsored by the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation are available at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre>.

DISCLAIMER: The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, the Administration for Children and Families, or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

For more information about this project, please contact Sarah Avellar at savellar@mathematica-mpr.com or Seth Chamberlain at seth.chamberlain@acf.hhs.gov.